

Graff

The Newberry Library
The Everett D. Graff Collection
of Western Americana

4361

TERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE
Omaha, Nebraska, August 27th, 1867.

The General Commanding takes pleasure in announcing to his command the following decided successes on the part of troops, serving in this Department, against greatly superior numbers of hostile indians.

On the 26th June last, a war party of Sioux and Cheyennes combined, numbering between five and six hundred warriors, under the leadership of *Roman Nose*, surrounded and attacked a train of supplies, escorted by forty-eight men of the 7th Cavalry, (temporarily serving in the Department,) under Lieutenants *S. M. Robbins* and *W. W. Cook*. The indians surrounded the train for three hours, making desperate efforts to capture it, but were gallant'y resisted, and eventually repulsed with a loss of five warriors killed and several wounded. Our loss—two men slightly wounded. The officers and men engaged are commended by their commanding officer for good conduct in this their first engagement with hostile indians.

On the 2d instant, Brevet Major *James Powell*, Captain 27th U. S. Infantry, with twenty-five men of his company and five citizens, employed in getting wood, five miles from Fort Philip Kearny, found themselves cut off from the Fort by a heavy force of indians, estimated by cool heads to be about two thousand.

They took position in a small corral, constructed of wagon beds and ox-yokes, and in this little hastily extemporized work, these thirty men most gallantly and determinedly defended themselves for three and a half hours, against overwhelming odds.

In their first assault the indians were mounted. Driven back they dismounted, took their horses to the rear, stripped themselves, and returned to the assault, only to be again repulsed with great loss, Major *Powell's* party were relieved by the arrival of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel *B. F. Smith*, Major 27th U. S. Infantry, with two companies of Infantry and some Artillery.

"Fortunately, Major *Powell's* party had just received the new

breech-loading rifles," as Major *Smith* reports, "had they been armed with the old muzzle-loading arm they must all have been massacred before relief could have reached them."

Major *Powell* modestly claims sixty indians killed and one hundred and twenty wounded. It is but just, however, to state, that reliable citizens and others, well informed as to result and indications, assert their firm conviction that not less than three hundred indians were killed or disabled. Major *Powell* by his coolness and firmness in this most creditable affair, has shown what a few determined men can effect with good arms and strong hearts, even with such temporary defensive arrangements as are almost always at hand, and that it is always safer, leaving out the questions of duty and professional honor, to stand and fight indians than to retreat from them. Had this party attempted to fall back, every one would have perished. As it was, it lost one officer and two enlisted men killed.

Lieutenant *Jenness*, a most excellent young officer, fell while affording to his men a fine example of coolness and daring in the performance of his duty.

His loss is regretted by his command by whom he was greatly esteemed and loved.

On the 17th instant, Lieutenant *Davis* of the Pawnee scouts, sent out with ten men to reconnoitre near Plum Creek, Nebraska, fell in with a greatly superior force of hostile indians. He gradually fell back until reinforced by Captain *Murie* and thirty men of his Pawnees, when they re-crossed the Platte river and were soon attacked by over a hundred Cheyennes and Sioux.

Captain *Murie* coolly held his fire until within proper distance, when he quickly charged and dispersed them, following them in a running fight for ten miles, killing fifteen, certain, and, it is believed, more; wounding a good many, and capturing two prisoners, thirty-one horses and mules, and a large number of blankets, saddles and other property.

Our only loss—one horse killed and five wounded. Captain *Murie*, Lieutenant *Davis*, and their brave Pawnees, are entitled to great credit for this most decided success.

The General Commanding regrets that the commanders in these

several affairs have not given the names of the enlisted men who most distinguished themselves, that they might be recorded in this order. It is not too late to remedy this apparent injustice, and the commanders concerned, will, on receipt of this order, report the desired names to these Headquarters.

Hereafter, in all reports of engagements, the names of enlisted men distinguishing themselves will be embraced in the report.

BY COMMAND OF BREVET MAJOR GENERAL AUGUR:

H. G. LITCHFIELD,

Bvt. Lieut. Colonel,

Act'g Assistant Adjutant General.

OFFICIAL:

Captain 27th Inf^{ty}, Aide-de-Camp.